

An interview with Robert M. Nesbit

ROBERT M. NESBIT

An Interview Conducted by

Frances Hughes

April 16, 1981

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NARRATOR DATA SHEET

April 16, 1981
DATE

Name of narrator: Robert M. Nesbit

Address: 610 N. Walnut. Brazil, IN 47834 Phone: 1-448-2247

Birthdate: January, 1901 Birthplace: _____

Length of residence in Terre Haute: 1918-1980

Education: Two years at Indiana State University.

Occupational history: Sports writer, city editor, sports editor.

Special interests, activities, etc. Golf, fishing and music

Major subject(s) of interview: Newspapers, politics, transportation,
music, theaters, sports

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interviewer</u>
04/16/81	2:30 P.M.	Vigo County Public Library Conference Rm.	Frances Hughes

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ROBERT NESBIT

Tape 1

April 16, 1981

Vigo County Public Library

INTERVIEWER: Frances Hughes

TRANSCRIBER: Kathleen M. Skelly

For: Vigo County Oral History Program

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FH: This is Frances Hughes. I am interviewing Robert Nesbit, former city editor of the Terre Haute Tribune, at 2:30 P.M., Thursday, April 16, at the Vigo County Public Library.

When did you come to Terre Haute, Bob?

NESBIT: Fall of 1918.

FH: And you came from where?

NESBIT: [I] came from Chillicothe, Illinois.

FH: Is that where your family lived?

NESBIT: Yeah, my father lived there. He was the pastor of the Methodist church over there, and he became pastor here of the Trinity Methodist church in Terre Haute at that time. That was in the fall of 1918 during the . . . when the "flu" ban was on during the war [World War I].

FH: And that's when you came with your family?

NESBIT: Yeah.

FH: And how old were you then?

NESBIT: I was 17.

FH: Were you in school here?

NESBIT: Yeah. I went to Garfield my senior year. Graduated from Garfield.

FH: Did you have any college education?

NESBIT: I went to Indiana State two years and people have asked me what course I took at Indiana State that helped me out in my career. I always tell them typing because I learned how to type, and that helped me get my first newspaper job.

FH: You were one of the rare ones that could type properly then.

NESBIT: I was one of the rare ones that used the touch system. For years I was the only person in the office that used the touch system to type.

FH: Then you started to work on the paper Were you still going to college then?

NESBIT: Yeah, I was still going to state. And I had been doing college sports for the Tribune; that was my first job. And I got some experience doing that for a year and that helped me. When there was the opening on the Star in the fall of 1922 or in August, that's when I got in there as sports writer.

FH: You went on at full time then?

NESBIT: Well, full time, yeah. But I went on when Jack Hannah . . . he was head of schools with a job down in Coal City, and he had to go down there for a year. I was supposed to be hired just for nine months when he could finish his contract down there. But I stayed on the paper from then on.

FH: Well, now, you stayed on as assistant sports editor for how long?

NESBIT: Well, when he came back, the telegraph editor quit and I became telegraph editor. And I see when Lawrence Sawyer, retiring editor of the Star . . . when he said that he was . . . when he was retiring, he said when he first came on the paper in 1924, I was the telegraph editor. So, I guess that that was the date, although I don't remember it.

FH: Now, how did the national news come into the paper when you first came there?

NESBIT: Well, everything then came in over the Morse code, and I'm telling you that Morse code is loud. All over the office, /you could hear/ the noise. And you learned how to hear over a telephone. You really got to concentrate. And that's one thing that I learned. I had to hear on the phone with that Morse code going, you know, eight hours a day in there. And

NESBIT: it really helped me later on when I wanted to concentrate on something. I've had people come up and stand right next to me, and I didn't even know they were there because I was concentrating on what I was doing and what I was reading.

FH: Now, when you were first on the paper they had vaudeville here at the Hippodrome, didn't they?

NESBIT: Yeah, they had vaudeville and later on they had stock company came in at the Hippodrome.

FH: Do you remember any of the people who were in stock here?

NESBIT: Well, very well. Ralph Bellamy, who later became a big motion picture star, was the leading man of the stock company. And in fact, we ran around . . . we got well acquainted with several members of the stock company, and that must have been . . . that was about a year before they built the new Terre Haute House. That was in the old Terre Haute House because they all lived there, and we used to have parties up in their rooms all the time.

And Bellamy was quite a guy. I always remember that when Bellamy . . . when he went to New York the first time, he went up and looked at the car he was going to ride on. The name of the railroad car was "Christopher Columbus." And here he was . . . you know, it reminded him that Christopher Columbus discovered America, and here Bellamy was invading New York on the "Christopher Columbus" railroad car. So, we all had a laugh out of it up at the station.

FH: Do you remember any of the outstanding ones in vaudeville?

NESBIT: Well, not so much . . .

FH: Blossom Seely?

NESBIT: Blossom Seely and Bennie Fields were the big stars of the vaudeville circuit, and, oh, I don't know . . . various bands played here. They played at the Indiana theater. Lawrence Welk played here; Benny Goodman played here. And, of course, at

NESBIT: the old Trianon /about 27th and Wabash/ out there . . . Paul Whiteman and all the top bands played out there in those days.

You know in those days all the theaters . . . it was before talkies /and/ all the theaters in town had musicians and orchestras. It was funny; you don't hear much about musicians around nowadays (I mean like that), but they were the fairhaired boys around town in those days. We all looked up to the musicians. They played in the theaters and everything, see.

FH: Then you had social contacts with a lot of these people?

NESBIT: Well, you know, we'd meet them and have lunch with them every now and then. Bellamy was our /friend/; he ran around with the gang. In fact, one time one of the guys bought an old Ford over there for 25 dollars, and we started out to Indianapolis in the thing and couldn't make it up Highland Lawn hill. And Ralph Bellamy was in the car then. We had to turn around and come back to Terre Haute. Thank heavens we did because I don't think we'd ever got to Indianapolis then in that 25-dollar Ford.

FH: Were you sober?

NESBIT: Well, yeah. Yeah, we were at that time.

FH: Now, wasn't this the time of the baseball teams, too?

NESBIT: Well, we had /Three I League/ baseball . . . had a very great year in /19/22. The year that I started on the paper, Terre Haute had a championship team, and /had stars like/ Charlie Root and Jim Elliott, who was later deputy sheriff here. They had a lot of top players. And Jack Cleary, who was the postmaster, was the president of the baseball team, and it was a real big thing out there. Everybody in town was interested in the baseball team in the year 1922.

FH: What was the name of that team?

NESBIT: Well, in those days the nickname of all our teams was the "Tots." You know, baby big leaguers. And our manager that year was Bob Coleman, who later

NESBIT: became manager of Evansville in the '40s when we were in the league again.

FH: Now, were these the years that Bud Taylor was fighting?

NESBIT: Bud Taylor was mainly fighting in the '20s. He started /boxing/ . . . he was just starting out and getting good in '22 when I started out in sports. Incidentally, it was funny to me. I didn't know anything about it, but /Tim Jewett/, the editor, took me to the Kiwanis Club meeting and introduced me to the crowd as the box fight editor of the Star. I didn't know a right cross from an uppercut in those days about boxing. But that's what he introduced me as, the box fight editor of the paper. And I, later on, covered all the boxing matches and went to a number of bouts around the country. Bud Taylor won a world's championship in Chicago, I think around '26 or '27, and he was a great favorite here. He had a lot . . . you know, a lot of freinds. Everybody liked him, and he was a great . . . Well, he was one of the great fighters in the country.

FH: He was bantamweight, wasn't he?

NESBIT: Bantamweight, yeah.

FH: And you were close friends, weren't you?

NESBIT: Yeah, very close friends. In fact, later on even when he was around here in the years from /19/36 through '50 -- several years there -- we had a Golden Gloves boxing team. We'd take boxers to Chicago every year, and he was our coach for several years going up there. And he was quite a favorite of Chicago people. I always introduced him up there as a former world's champion. He, of course, naturally, /would be/ taking a bow in the ring at the Chicago Stadium. And it was nice for him, you know, to recapture some of his glory of the old days by being introduced there.

FH: Now, you were in charge of the Golden Gloves locally for how long?

NESBIT: For 20 years. About '36 to . . . I retired

NESBIT: from sports in '55 when I became city editor of the Tribune .

FH: That was sponsored by the . . .

NESBIT: I ran the Golden Gloves. It was sponsored by the Tribune-Star, yes. As a charity for the basket fund.

FH: The Christmas basket fund.

NESBIT: The Christmas basket fund, yeah.

FH: Now, wasn't there one society wrestling event here . . . wrestling event, not boxing?

NESBIT: Yeah, that was, I think, one of the most unusual events ever put on in Terre Haute. We had a club here that I belonged to called the American Business Club, a bunch of young businessmen. And we got the idea of having a society wrestling show with everybody coming in full dress to attend the show. We had it at the Shrine Temple. And we had the mayor; we had the chief of police; and we had the sheriff; all of them had to get in full dress to wear to that event. And it went over big. In fact, that was during the Depression when, you know, it was hard to get money for anything. But we built boxes all over the floor of the Shrine, and everybody had their own box. Everybody thought it was a very unique idea. I remember Fred Bays from Sullivan. He was quite enthused about it when he found out what we were going to do, and he helped us with some of the promotion.

FH: Was there a dinner before that event?

NESBIT: I don't remember. We had luncheons, you know, where we made plans for the event.

FH: I meant the night of the event. Do you remember? Was there a dinner before?

NESBIT: They had a party afterward, yeah, down at the hotel. Yeah. They had a victory party after the event. At that time we had our headquarters at the Deming Hotel and we had the party over there.

FH: But there were wrestling matches all the time here, weren't there? Weren't they at the Shrine Temple?

NESBIT: They were at the Shrine and in those days the Shrine could be rented for sporting events, but later on they closed it. They got a lot of new members, and they needed it for their own activities. Then they closed it for sporting events. I don't think they've had very few up there since.

FH: I understand that during the years that reporters went to the bars in the West End down in the Red Light district to pick up political news before an election or during the time of an election. Is that right?

NESBIT: Well, that reminds me of the time that they had the city manager campaign in Terre Haute, and the Star was boosting the campaign to get a city manager. And there was one of the madams in the West End . . . it developed that one of her rivals down there that she didn't like was around collecting all the money from houses of prostitution to give to the campaign against city manager. And I think they were afraid if they got a city manager in Terre Haute, they might come down and close them all up. So, she called up and offered the paper to give us all the dope. So I was picked to send down and interview the madam and get all the dope that she had on the fund that they were collecting from all the prostitutes in the West End.

FH: Now, this was to defeat the city manager?

NESBIT: Yeah. They were working to defeat the city manager. And the Star was for the city manager.

FH: Was she for the city manager?

NESBIT: I don't know whether she was for it or not, but she was mad at this other woman, so she was willing to give us the story on what they were doing down there, collecting money to beat the city manager.

FH: Did they pick up other news down in the West End? Did the reporters hang around down there to drink or to pick up news or what?

NESBIT: Well, I don't know whether they picked up news down there, but there was one place down there which . . . in those days the home brew was the big drink around. Then they began to bring in this beer without the alcohol in it from Milwaukee, and they would shoot some alcohol into the beer and that was better -- a

NESBIT: a better drink -- than home brew! So, some of the boys would go down and that was one of the, you know, better places. Of course, that was all illegal and every now and then those places would get raided down there.

FH: How did the papers handle the news when there were raids down there, when there was some crime down there?

NESBIT: How'd they handle it? Oh, they handled it just like regular news.

FH: While you were on the paper, the Klan was active. When you were younger and on the paper, the Klan was active. Can you tell us anything about that?

NESBIT: Oh, well, the Klan was very active in Terre Haute. As you know, in some elections here the Klan swept the elections; they elected practically all the offices in Terre Haute. So they must have had . . . they had to have thousands of members here in town, although, like you said, nobody would brag about it. But I had a rather personal experience. I had two or three times when I figured I was lucky to have a job because the editor called me in and asked me about joining the Klan. And I was trying to think of something to say, so I told him my father who lived in the northern part of Indiana had advised me not to join the Klan. So he let me get away with that.

However, there was another one of the members or reporters that told him he didn't want to join the Klan, and he said, "Well, we'll accept your resignation anytime you want to give it to us." And he said, "Well, I don't want to resign; I like to work here." We had quite a gang in those days down there in the '20s. We were all very friendly and ran around together and everything. So, it turned out he was over in Indianapolis (this reporter was in Indianapolis) a month or so later and told them over there about the editor over here insisting on the reporters joining the Klan. Two weeks later we had a new editor over here then. At that time, the Indianapolis Star owned the Terre Haute Star; and they fired this editor and sent a new one over from Indianapolis. So, that's when Mr. George Padgett became our editor of the old Star and he was editor until he died, I think in 1932.

FH: The paper at that time was owned by the Schafer interests, wasn't it?

NESBIT: Yes. They had what they called the "Star league of Indiana," which was the Muncie Star, the Terre Haute Star, and Indianapolis Star.

FH: Wasn't the Chicago Post in that?

NESBIT: Chicago Post was not part of the Star league of Indiana. They also owned the Chicago Post newspaper.

FH: What about the Evansville paper?

NESBIT: No. I don't think they owned that. Later on the Indianapolis Star bought the Vincennes paper, and they still own the Vincennes paper.

Another funny story about . . . I was telling about sometimes I figured I was lucky to be working. One of our editors had a fight with his wife one day and got intoxicated. He came over and said if she calls over here, I'm not here. So, he went in and went to sleep in his room. And she started calling on the telephone an hour or so later, wanted to talk to him. /We said, "well, I'm sorry, he's not in." About 7:30 or 8 o'clock somebody came running over from 7th and Main, says, "You guys better duck. Here comes the boss's wife!" So, we all ducked back in the back end and here she come and found him in there laying on his chair. And she insisted that he fire me because I lied to her about him, although I'd done what he told me to do. But luckily, of course, he wouldn't fire me; but if she had had her way, he'd . . . she wanted him to fire me right then. So, maybe I was just lucky back in those days.

FH: She was of Polish descent, a temperamental lady, wasn't she?

NESBIT: Oh, very much, yes. She came here as a dancer with some touring dance team. He met her over at Indianapolis and married her. She was . . . she played the organ some, too, you know. Learned the organ. In fact, /she/ played in one of the theaters some during the dinner hour.

FH: She played at the Indiana, I believe.

NESBIT: No, the Liberty I think back in those days.

FH: She used to get theater tickets and give them to a prominent dentist here. Do you remember that?

NESBIT: No, I didn't hear that incident.

FH: Now, what about Prohibition?

NESBIT: Well, Prohibition, we had it for 12 years. We had it in 1919, and it was in all the time during the '20s there; it was throughout the '20s /18th Amendment repealed December 5, 1933/. There were beer joints all over, you know, all over town, all over the county. And they raided them and everything.

FH: Now, there were some gangs during that time, weren't there?

NESBIT: Some what?

FH: Gangs here, some real . . .

NESBIT: Oh, yes, there was some gang warfare. We had a guy, one of the gangsters /Jackie Morrison/, shot in the alley right behind the Tribune /Building/. I remember down by Prairieton. I went down there once . . . In fact, one of our editors went down there (his girl friend was relation to the guy that had a still down there , and they went down there).

The gangs didn't want . . . you know, they were trying to control things, and they went down there and tore up his still and shot a few things up around there, although they didn't kill anybody or anything.

But those were rough times.

FH: They were fun though (smiling).

NESBIT: Well, yes, there was a certain amount of fun.

Yes. Like Bellamy there. I was trying to remember . . . one time, one night there at two

NESBIT: o'clock in the morning he said, "I heard all about this Wabash River. I want to see it." So we walked from 7th and Main clear down to the middle of the Wabash on the bridge there, and he recited a poem out there . . . I don't know, about the Wabash or something at two o'clock in the morning. But anyway, he had seen the Wabash and that's the way he saw it. He was quite a guy.

FH: Weren't there some funny stories? I remember you told one reporter to go jump in the river.

NESBIT: Yes. And he did! And we were scared to death. We thought that he . . . of course, he was intoxicated, I guess or something, when he did go jump in the river. I'd forgotten all about that.

FH: As I remember, you were out at the Flashlight when he came in. Do you remember the Flashlight?

NESBIT: Oh, yes. It was quite a barbecue place at what is now 25th and Poplar. It's all houses now, but it was out in the country then.

FH: Do you remember any other clubs during Prohibition?

NESBIT: Oh, there were clubs all around. There were roadhouses up in North Terre Haute for some reason. There were three of them around North Terre Haute. And the Old Haymarket up at 13th and Haythorne Avenue, that was where Big Ione had her heyday playing the piano and singing ribald songs and all that. Of course, that was when beer first came back, and then you could have places out in the country. Later on they closed then. Now they're back out in the country again.

FH: What are some of the biggest stories that you remember during the time you were on the paper?

NESBIT: Well, some of the biggest stories were the . . . one of the first big ones I remember was when the packing house, the Home Packing house, burned down there. And that was only a month or two after I got on the paper. It must have been in '22 or '23. It

NESBIT: was on the river bank down there, a terrific fire. And then the big strike /General Strike of 1935/ at the Columbian Enameling /& Stamping Co./ When they brought the troops in here to settle the strike was quite a story.

And a funny thing, one of our reporters had a friend in New York who had joined the Communist party. And he /the friend/ came back here and was asking about that deal up there at the Columbian Enameling mill and how the troops stopped the trouble and everything. And he said, "Why, how many troops did they have there?" And they said, "Oh, I don't know, a hundred or so!" He said, "How many union men you got in town?" He says, "Oh, maybe a couple thousand." He says, "See, you could have whipped those guys!" (laughs)

But he was a . . . he'd been in New York and joined the Communist party. And one of his lady friends who had been a reporter here, she went right along with him. You probably remember her.

FH: Yes, I do.

NESBIT: Yes.

FH: She's still a Communist as far as I know. She's still alive.

How about the Lewis mine disaster?

NESBIT: That was a big story. There were some . . . the owners tried to operate a non-union mine down there in . . . it wasn't Lewis, it was Pimento. And the miners went down there. They had a big fight down there. In fact, one of the owners was hit over the head by a club or something and was never right after that. He was . . . I forget his name, but he was crippled the rest of his life just from that big fight down there at the mine that night.

Of course, there were numerous incidents at mines in those days when somebody would try to open up a non-union mine and the union miners would go out there and get in a fight with a non-union miner.

NESBIT: That was a fairly common occurrence. I can remember one like that in New Goshen, too, at a mine up there. Of course, all the mines were deep shaft mines in those days.

And we had mine disasters, too, which
/We/ had a huge one down in Sullivan, about 90 people killed at the city mine down there. /It/ was a big story.

FH: Do you remember when that was?

NESBIT: Well, it had to be in the, oh, maybe /19/25, along in there, something like that. It was pretty early.

FH: Do you remember the train wreck during World War II?

NESBIT: Yes, yes. I don't remember much about it though. I was on sports then. I wasn't on the city desk, and it was up there just south of North Terre Haute on Haythorne Avenue. When the train was wrecked, a lot of the soldiers were up in the front car, and that was the reason a number of them were killed. If they'd been in some of the back cars, they might have been all right.

FH: Well, now you've seen the changes in modes of transportation in Terre Haute, and how do you think this has affected Terre Haute? I mean the railroads and . . .

NESBIT: Well, Terre Haute is an entirely different town, you know. When I first came to Terre Haute, they had streetcars all over town. We had an interurban service to Paris, Sullivan, Clinton, and Brazil, Indianapolis. You could ride the streetcar. That was before we even had many buses. In fact, we didn't even have paved roads to any of these towns! There were dirt roads or gravel roads. And that was the reason you could have the electric lines. And when the roads were paved and the buses started running, the electric lines were just gradually on the way out. But I'll tell you, as far as pollution is concerned, it was much better in those days with electric lines than it is with all the pollution

NESBIT: that's going out in the air ever since.

FH: What about the trains? Did you ride . . .

NESBIT: And then the streetcars . . . you know, gradually from the jitneys and taxis and everything, the streetcars gradually died out, too. But I think they ran up into the '30s, didn't they?

FH: Yes.

What about the trains? Do you think when we quit having train transportation through here it made much difference to Terre Haute?

NESBIT: Oh, definitely, yes. It made a lot of difference. Terre Haute was a great rail center at one time. It had, you know, the Pennsylvania and the C. & E.I. and other lines coming in. Had a beautiful big station up there /Union Depot/ with a cover over the lines . . . over the tracks a block wide on each side of the big building. Fine restaurants up there and everything /was/ nice. /The/ Big Four /railroad/ had a nice station. Oldtimers remember those trains and riding those trains and everything. /It was a thrill./ It makes you kind of sick.

FH: Of course, they were dirty.

NESBIT: Well, some of them were and some of them weren't.

FH: Well, they were 'til the diesel came in!

NESBIT: I don't remember they were so dirty.

We always got a kick every year /when we/ took the Golden Gloves kids to Chicago on the train, and they got to eat in the diner and everything. And that was a thrill for a lot of them because they'd never eaten in a diner. Some of them had never been on a train! So, that was always a big highlight of the trip for. . . . In those days the teams from Memphis, Tennessee . . . not Memphis, Nashville, and /the/ Evansville team and the Terre Haute team, a lot of time they would reserve a car for us. We'd have a private car going to Chicago, and they'd get

NESBIT: on, and we'd all join them. We'd get on here. /I/ remember those days; /I/ always enjoyed those trips.

FH: Now, you were . . . first you were assistant sports editor, then you were telegraph editor. When did you go back on sports?

NESBIT: I went back on sports when the Terre Haute Star bought the Terre Haute Post. That was what? 'Twenty-eight?

FH: It was 1930, I think.

NESBIT: 'Thirty? I had always wanted to get back in sports. Jack Hannah, who had been the sports editor, quit to take a job as publicity director at the Normal School then or college. And so I went on sports, and we had, of course, the Star and the Post then. And I was sports editor of the Star; Larry Denning was sports editor of the Post. And then when the Tribune bought the Star in what year? 1930?

FH: Nineteen thirty-one.

NESBIT: Then I became sports editor of the Star. And Ralph White, /who/ was sports editor of the Tribune, died in 1934 and I moved over and became sports editor of the Tribune. And then since the editor of the Star was unhappy about me going over there and I was the only person in the history of the two papers that ever /made the transfer/, they made a rule they would not let anybody on the Star go on the Tribune. So I was the only one that ever made the jump. I was engaged to get married; and if there was a day job there, I wanted it. And I practically had to get down on my knees to beg for it, but I got it.

FH: Then when did you become city editor of the Tribune?

NESBIT: In 1955.

FH: And you retired?

NESBIT: Retired in 1966. And in those ten years . . . it seems quite a while ago that I retired as sports editor. But as city editor, I started to write a fishing column. All the time I was city editor I kept that fishing column going because I had an eye

NESBIT: on that as a retirement job. And when I retired, then I kept that; and it's been a very handy retirement deal for me. I have a lot of nice connections and get several trips a year out of it, and it's been a good retirement deal for me. Funny thing, I had a friend down in Tucson, Keen Rafferty, who was a reporter here back in '22. And he was, later on, head of the journalism department at the University of New Mexico. Now he is retired and living and has absolutely nothing to do. Of course, his health is bad down in Tucson, and he wrote me a letter recently. He said, "Even though you've just got a small job there writing a weekly column, hang onto it." He says, "At least you've got some interest." And he says, "I don't have any," and he said, "it's rough."

FH: Would you like to tell us some of your secret fishing places?

NESBIT: Well, there's plenty of fishing places around here (I mean that are not secret) that are good. The Green Valley mine pond down here, the lakes down in Prairie Creek. There are lakes that . . . what's that park they named Fowler Park after the veteran down there east of . . . down south of Youngstown? Oh, but that's open to the public. The West Terre Haute gravel pit. There's gravel pits north of town. There's all kind of pits around. You can belong to conservation clubs around here for \$2 or \$3 and fish two or three lakes. Fish all you want to. There are plenty of places.

FH: Can anyone fish in these places you just mentioned?

NESBIT: Anybody can fish in them. Yeah. Yeah. There's plenty of places to fish.

FH: What do you catch?

NESBIT: Oh, we catch bass and blue gill mainly. Might catch some catfish, and, of course, the river is now getting to be a pretty good fishing place again. For years it was polluted when all the cities dumped their garbage into the rivers. But now they're cleaning up

NESBIT: the rivers. And I have a friend up by Wabash. The Tippecanoe River is supposed to be one of the finest fishing streams in the state. And he says now he does better up there around Logansport in the Wabash River than he does in the Tippecanoe River.

FH: Do you know anything about "shelling the river"? Did you ever run into any of the men who "shell the river"?

NESBIT: No, I never did. But they pick up clams -- a lot up around Montezuma, . . .

FH: Do they sell them by the ton?

NESBIT: I don't know how they sell them. But they do . . . I know there's a lot of that goes on. I'm not a river fisherman or a creek fisherman. I'm mainly in ponds and lakes. And at my age I'm much better off than . . . I can't wade these creeks any more. You know, you never know when you're going to step in over your head and all that stuff.

FH: Now, the Newspaper Guild was formed in 1944. You were active in that in the beginning and later on.

NESBIT: Yes, one thing I remember about the Newspaper Guild when it was organized, they set the original scale, salary scale. They talk about women not making any money, but the scale was set on a woman's salary. The woman was Mabel McKee, and she was making big \$44 a week. And that was the top salary of a reporter, of any reporter in Terre Haute. And you remember that's what the first scale was set at.

FH: She was a sob sister.

NESBIT: Yeah. Well, she . . . yeah. She was a reporter; she wasn't a society writer. And, of course, that's one thing the women have always made, you know, just as much as the men.

FH: Not quite.

NESBIT: Well, I'm not talking about society; I'm talking about the reporters.

FH: Now, you were a charter member, is that right?

NESBIT: Yes. Yeah, I was a charter member.

FH: And when were you president?

NESBIT: I don't remember. You say . . . it says here I was president in 1947 so I guess that's (Frances chuckles) when it was.

FH: You were the fourth president, I think.

NESBIT: Yeah.

FH: Would you like to tell us some funny stories about the paper?

NESBIT: Well, I don't particularly remember too many funny stories. We had one story about when one of the girls down in the West End had a fight with her lover or something and committed suicide. And some of the boys went down there and were helping themselves to some of her belongings. And there was a nice picture there. I don't know whether it was her in the picture or not, but anyway it was a nice picture frame. So this reporter thought he'd get something, so he took this picture frame. Later on, I saw his best girl's picture in that same frame, and I got on him about having this prostitute's picture in the same frame /that/ later on he had his best girl's picture in and he didn't like it very well. Naturally, I don't blame him. He didn't think that anybody would, I guess, know where he got the frame. But the boys up in the office razed him about it quite a bit.

FH: Was his girl from a prominent family?

NESBIT: Very prominent. Yes.

FH: What about some of the stories about . . .

NESBIT: Her father was mayor. [Wood Posey]

FH: What are some of the stories . . . other stories about reporters?

NESBIT: Oh, I don't remember too many stories about the old days.

NESBIT: One incident that I remember was when they had the famous . . . what was the incident at Rose Poly when they put [croton oil] in the punch. All the women at the punchbowl couldn't get to the toilet quick enough. And they were lined up and everything else, and a lot of them got deathly sick. And one of them that got deathly sick was our society editor of the Star. And the city editor went out with his big long pistol that night, and if he'd found the guy that had put the croton oil in the punch, he might have shot him. We wondered why he was so fired up about it. A few months later he left town, and the society editor left with him. They lived happily in Texas ever after.

FH: Wasn't there a time that he couldn't get to work because of something his wife did?

NESBIT: I don't know anything about that.

FH: About his leg?

NESBIT: No. Oh, yeah, yeah! They claimed that one time she got mad at him and locked his leg up in the closet, and he couldn't get . . . he had a wooden leg and he couldn't get his leg so he couldn't come to work. She'd locked his leg up in the closet.

Downtown Terre Haute, of course, one of the big changes . . . of course, everybody sees this downtown as much different from what it was over the old days. And like I said, in the theaters we all had [fun]. I can remember vividly when the first talkies came to Terre Haute about 1931 and '32 and oh, boy, that was big! But that was the end of musicians.

And one little funny incident I remember about one of the bands over there (and we were talking recently about this) . . . Johnny "Scat" Davis was with Fred Waring and was later a movie star in Hollywood and is now living down in Arlington, Texas. He recently (he's an old friend of President Reagan, you know) . . . he was invited to come to Washington, and his band played for the inaugural ball. Anyway, he was playing with a local band there, and at that time the band was playing in a box. They had great big boxes. The band was playing in a box there at

NESBIT: the Grand /Theater/. And every now and then the /music/ would go out over the radio. And the leader, he had the headphones; and every now and then he'd put those headphones on to see how the /music/ band was /sounding/ on the air. And then the band would start playing sour when he had the headphones on. And he'd get some of the most terrible looks on his face (laughs) because he thought, "My god, it can't sound that bad, can they?" And then he'd take the headphones off, and they'd play swinging again, see.

And some of the musicians tipped us off about what was going on there, and we'd go over and sit there (continuing to laugh) and get a kick out of it.

Actually, they wouldn't do that very long but just enough to be funny for him to hear the sour notes thrown out over the air.

FH: Now, Johnny "Scat" Davis was from Brazil or Terre Haute?

NESBIT: He was from Brazil.

FH: And he married a local girl /I. E. Garver/.

NESBIT: Brā-zil. I live in Brā-zil now, you know. I've lived there since last summer.

And /Davis/ married a local girl, Ross Garver's daughter who was head of the theater. One of our former reporters, Jim Dressler, who is now editor of the Brazil paper, he called down there. He got the number some way at Arlington, Texas, where Scat Davis is living and Johnny answered the phone. And he told him all about being down in Washington playing the inaugural ball.

But I think he just plays club dates and what not. I think his brother Art lives down there, too.

FH: Now, you play the piano yourself, and Claude Thornhill was a good friend of yours.

NESBIT: Yes. One of my best friends. For years, Claude Thornhill was an amazing musician. At the age of 14 he could play real good piano and marimbaphone and

NESBIT: was a real genius. And he had a pet tune that he played that he became so well known on. The late Leo Baxter at that time had the theater there that they brought Claude down from Garfield high school to play "Who" with the band in the Liberty theater when Leo was away and he was only 14 years old.

And he was, later on, in New York and played his theme song, famous theme song, "Snowfall" first time over their coast-to-coast radio networks. Later on I was in New York in 1936 at a bowling tournament and I was out to his house. At that time he was playing with Andre Kostelanetz on recording dates. And he was arranging a song, and he was arranging it for 42 instruments. And he was writing instrument music for all these 42 instruments. And I had decided right then if the guy knew enough music to do that, he must be a real genius. You know he had . . . he could . . . his tone . . . his ear was so perfect, he could go over in the corner of the room. You could go over and hit a note on the piano, and he'd tell you what that note was. And he wasn't even looking at it.

In fact, I composed a little piece there one night on the piano. He sat over there on the davenport and wrote it right out -- what I was playing on the piano. He's a real genius.

FH: What other local musicians do you remember way back then?

NESBIT: Well, I remember a lot of them. Bud Cromwell had a band around here and he was one of our buddies. He'd come up with the orchestra after he'd play a date and sit around and play cards with the boys. And I see Bud now. He's one of the Sunday benchholders down there at Honey Creek Square. He comes down there nearly every Sunday and you'll see him. I've run into him down there a lot, and he always mentions the old Star days when we used to play cards up there with Monty Grant and Bruce McCormick and all the boys.

FH: What did "Izzy" Friedman play?

NESBIT: "Izzy" Friedman was a clarinet player. And at

NESBIT: that time he played in the American theater a short time with Paul Johnson, and I was taking piano lessons then from Claude Thornhill . . . I mean from Paul Johnson. And the lessons I would take, he would take a popular tune, and he'd rearrange it right -- chords and stuff -- and that was the kind of music that I was learning from. And a funny thing when he died -- Paul Johnson died -- they wrote in his obituary in the paper that among his students were Bob Nesbit and Claude Thornhill. (laughs) And, of course, I couldn't even carry Claude Thornhill's hat out of the room as far as music was concerned. He was a nationally-known orchestra leader.

One of the questions on here is what was Garfield like as a student? I was only in Garfield about a year, so I couldn't tell you much how I was a student. But I did live long enough to go to their 50th anniversary, and a lot of people I think get me mixed up with my younger brother /Harold/ who was just two years younger than me and was quite an athlete at Garfield for a year or two and later played football for four years at DePauw. No, I can't . . . Jim Conover, who's still around town, was in my class at Garfield. He was in the war /World War I/ and came back and graduated. And I always remember Jim.

FH: Who was principal when you went there?

NESBIT: Mr. Hylton. E. E. Hylton was principal. And things were a lot different in those days. I had a Saturday job down there working /at/ Joseph's clothing store, and they were going to play the Wiley-Garfield game. The Garfield suits were all pretty mangy, so he asked me if they had any purple jerseys down there. And I said, "Yeah, they just got a bunch of them in." He said, "Well, bring them up here, and we'll see if we can outfit the team for the Garfield-Wiley, /the/ big Garfield-Wiley game." So I took all them dozen or fifteen purple shirts up there, and they had to fit . . . make them fit one way or another. So the Garfield team had new purple jerseys on for the Wiley game that came from the store. No numbers on them (laughs) or anything, but there were tickled to death to get them. But that was a little incident that I know the people . . . Mr. Joseph that ran the store

NESBIT: was quite pleased that I had the idea of selling the sweaters for the team up there.

FH: Now, you're a very good pianist, but you never played with orchestras, did you?

NESBIT: No. Never played with an orchestra in my life. And I play every day. Like this morning, I played maybe a half an hour; and there's hardly a week goes by that I don't compose a new piece. That's my hobby. And I had a lucky break a couple of years ago. I had a sister who died over in Indianapolis. She had a lovely Baby Grand, and the number one item in the will was that her brother Bob got the Baby Grand. And naturally, I'm enjoying that immensely and it

No, I've always been friends of musicians. In fact, I sometimes wonder if I'm not a frustrated musician. Maybe that's what I should have been. But I played all my life.

FH: Do you play modern tunes now or the ones that you knew when we were young?

NESBIT: I play the old tunes, old tunes, very few . . . if the modern tunes are pretty and they got a good melody, I play some of them. But a lot of this stuff, I don't go for it at all. I still play mostly the old tunes.

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 1-SIDE 2

FH: Now, how is the downtown use-to-be compared to today?

NESBIT: Well, the downtown in the old days compared to now is just as different as day and night. In the old days, everybody went downtown on Saturday night. Why, I can remember my landlady, her boy friend took the car down at 5 o'clock and parked it in front of a store. And we only lived a few blocks up 6th Street. And then they'd walk downtown and the car would be there. And they'd sit there 'til 10 o'clock and chat

NESBIT: with /friends/ that'd come walking down the street. Everybody went downtown on Saturday night, and the stores did a lot of business on Saturday night. And it was just a big deal.

And, of course, we had a lot of good restaurants. I could remember when there were four or five good restaurants between 8th and 9th Street, including a Chinese restaurant /King Lem Inn/ and the old American restaurant down there, and they were well-known restaurants. They had good restaurants between 7th and 8th. They had Berry's restaurant, and we had . . . of course, the Goodie Shop came along later on. But the hotels had, you know, good restaurants. And Terre Haute nowadays compared . . . just like the newspapers have changed so much. In those days we had to wait two or three days to get a mat to make a picture. Then later on, the pictures would all come over a wire. /We would/ just take them off and make a cut and run them in the paper. Now they don't even have to do that! They just take a picture /off the wire/ now and they can get them in the paper in five minutes if they want to.

Speed, I think, is one of the great things. There's a difference between the newspapers in the old days and now. Of course, we had a lot of good writers /too/ in the old days.

For instance, nowadays you don't hear about . . . we had drama critics in the old days. We had vaudeville -- several houses. We had theater; some of the best known theater people in the country came to town. Some of the famous actresses all came here. The Barrymores and all of them. All gone. And the papers had somebody, that was their whole job, just to cover the theaters. And so it's really, really changed.

FH: Mique O'Brien was the theater critic for the Tribune for years, wasn't he?

NESBIT: Mique O'Brien, yes. He had been in New York and came here. A funny thing about . . . in New York he wrote all his reviews with a pencil; and when he got back to Terre Haute, he still wrote them with a pencil. He didn't even type them. He wrote them with pencil, and I don't know whether anybody ever

NESBIT: typed them or not. But he wrote his reviews. The divine Sarah Bernhardt, the famous French actress, you know, was around for years. I can remember one time she came here, and a bunch of St. Mary's girls came over for the show. And they went up to see the editor and asked him if they . . . if Mr. O'Brien could help them get them back to see Madame Bernhardt. So, he had apparently interviewed Madame Bernhardt in New York at one of her shows. So, he went back-stage with the girls, and they said, "The Madame won't see anybody." He went up and kicked on the door and said, "Come on out here, you old bag. There's some girls that want to see you!" That's what he told the divine Sarah. So, apparently he knew her. He'd known her in New York. But he was quite a character.

FH: Do you remember shows that you attended at the Grand like Will Rogers?

NESBIT: I /heard/ Will Rogers and Will Rogers, of course, in those days had a funny trick. Every town he /visited/, he'd come up to the newspaper and talk to the reporters awhile before the show and get the names of some of the leading politicians in town, and then he would crack jokes on those politicians during the show.

Another deal that I remember while I'm talking about politicians, one of the king bees around here was little Dick Werneke. Then in '32 when /Franklin D./ Roosevelt was running for President . . . in those days the president traveled in trains and always in a club car in the back, and he'd make his speech from the back of the club car. So, he was up there making a speech, and a big crowd /was/ there -- several hundred people. And he's telling them all about your beautiful green grass and your prairies and your farms and all that stuff. That was about the time they were voting on beer to come back. "Little" Dick goes up and kicks him under . . . I hope he didn't kick him on the bad leg. But anyway, he attracted his /Roosevelt's/ attention while he was speaking. He /leaned over/ and says, "Tell 'em something about beer." And FDR never missed a stride, "And ladies and gentlemen, I want you to know if I am elected President I will do my best to bring back your beverages." /This got/ a big cheer from the crowd, you know. And ol' Werneke, everybody knew as the guy that kicked

NESBIT: Roosevelt in the leg and told him to say something about beer up there. That was a joke around here for years.

FH: Well, that was one of the big industries of Terre Haute -- liquor, wasn't it?

NESBIT: Well, yes, when they had the brewery down there, they . . . it was only a year or two later that they opened the Terre Haute Brewery. And, of course, the brewery had been there from pre-war days, I mean from pre-Prohibition days. And, of course, it went big for a number of years until the big breweries started buying out all the little ones and closed them and . . . Heck, at one time when they first came back, I would say there was a dozen breweries in the state of Indiana. There was one in Lafayette, two or three in South Bend, Fort Wayne, Mishawaka, couple in Indianapolis, two or three in Evansville, and they were all over. And, of course, . . .

FH: We had distilleries, too, didn't we?

NESBIT: We had . . . yeah, we had two distilleries.

FH: Did any of those reopen after Prohibition?

NESBIT: Oh, yes. I mean /there were/ two distilleries that ran after Prohibition. Of course, Commercial Solvents, they made whiskey, but they sold it to another distributor, and they didn't make it under their own name. But we had one distiller here that ran big for a while. /It was Merchants./

FH: Other than to come downtown to eat or to visit, what else did people come downtown for? The theaters? Were there special attractions on the streets?

NESBIT: No, I don't recall there were any particular special attractions on the street.

FH: Hot tamale man?

NESBIT: Well, yes, we had a hot tamale man at 7th and Main for years that had the best hot tamales around, and everybody bought . . . A lot of times one of

NESBIT: our guys would be over at 7th and Main. He'd buy a few and bring them back to the office.

FH: What characters do you remember, other than newspaper people, that used to hang out around 7th and Main?

NESBIT: Well, I don't remember so many. I remember Eddie Taylor, the armless newsboy, who was for years out there at 5 o'clock in the morning yelling, "Star." And we had a friend here (laughs) from Philadelphia, and he couldn't sleep up at the Terre Haute House because here's ol' Eddie out there yelling, "Paper," at 5 o'clock in the morning. He says, "Why don't you shut that guy up?" (laughing) He says, "He's waking me up at 5 o'clock in the morning."

And then, the character I remember . . . not a character, but I remember Chambers' chili 710 Ohio was a big favorite in those days and Archie Chambers was the guy that had the chili. And his nephew, Bill Chambers, was one of his clerks and the other one was Cliff. And that was a very popular . . . everybody in town went there for Chambers' chili. And later on he was out east, and then they still had it up to a few years ago up on North 13th Street. But, lord, in those days on 12 o'clock a Saturday night you'd walk out there and the place would be packed. They'd all go to the theater and get out of the theater at 11 o'clock and go on home and get a bowl of chili on the way home. Of course, a lot of the tavern crowd would do that, too. But I don't know where they go now, but I suppose there are different people doing it. But they don't eat Chambers' chili which was, to me, the best chili in the country.

FH: The Toasty Shop was a hangout for . . .

NESBIT: Yes. It was . . . that came here . . . I forget. Clark was the man's name, came up here from Kentucky. And he come in here and made the first three-decker sandwiches ever in Terre Haute. He'd make them with . . . some with pork and beef, some with ground ham and egg and egg salad. And they were also famous for their scrambled eggs. They

NESBIT: would take and put scrambled eggs and put some cream and put it in the malted milk mixer and fluff it all up in the mixer. And then they would put it in and make the scrambled eggs with that cream in there, and I'm telling you, they were some scrambled eggs! Nobody ever . . . you can't get them, that kind of food, around Terre Haute any more.

FH: How many of those places stayed open 24 hours?

NESBIT: Well, the Toasty Shop was open 24 hours. I don't remember whether . . . McPeak's was a famous restaurant in those days. And then when I first started clerking over in Joseph's clothing store in 1918, you could buy a steak at McPeak's restaurant for 10¢. A little steak, you could actually buy it for 10 cents. And they had a great big long bar in there, you know, where they ate and everything.

FH: There were a lot of candy shops downtown, too, weren't there?

NESBIT: Oh, yes. A lot of places that . . . I forget the place at 8th and Main which made candy, and they made it there at 7th and Main.

FH: Patsy Mehany?

NESBIT: Patsy Mehany, yeah. And a lady who was later our phone operator, Mrs. Frances Hamby, she worked in Patsy Mehany's and later on married Harry Hamby and became the phone operator at the paper. But Terre Haute is nothing like the old days.

Tony Hulman made a big difference in Terre Haute, you know, when he graduated in Yale around 19- . . . what? '24 maybe? [1924]

Later on I read in an Indianapolis paper that Tony Hulman inherited the Clabber Girl fortune. I could have corrected that. Tony Hulman had a lot to do with making the Clabber Girl fortune. I mean that was always . . . when he . . . during '32 there when the Depression was on, Tony . . . they'd always talk about Vice President Tom Marshall saying what the country needed was a good 5-cent cigar. Well, he [Tony] decided, I think, what the country needed

NESBIT: was a 10-cent can of Clabber Girl. And he sent crews all over the country with Clabber Girl. A lot of people were doing their own baking in those days, and apparently it doesn't take much money to make a can of Clabber Girl. And he sent crews all over the country, and they . . . Well, when I go to San Francisco, I can go right down to the super-market right now and buy a can of Clabber Girl baking powder. So, it's still coast-to-coast.

FH: Didn't they have road signs like Burma Shave had?

NESBIT: Oh, yes, Clabber Girl did. Yes, they had them all over the country. And that was . . . I think probably perhaps the greatest individual campaign as far as business was concerned that Mr. Hulman ever did. I mean that's just my personal opinion. I don't know.

FH: Why do you think more industries didn't come into Terre Haute?

NESBIT: Well, Terre Haute had a reputation as a tough labor town for years. Partly because of the miners, you know. And they didn't . . . Terre Haute didn't grow any. They just stayed at 69,000 or 79,000 -- whatever it was -- for 30 years. Didn't grow a bit.

FH. Do you think they cared?

NESBIT: I don't know whether they cared or not, whether that was it or not. But that was just a theory that industry didn't come to Terre Haute because they were afraid of the labor problem.

FH: Why do you think there are so many senior citizens here now?

NESBIT: Well, I think one of the reasons there are so many senior citizens . . . because there are so many more senior citizens. The doctors get better; and as the doctors get better, why, the senior citizens live longer. And I'm one of them!

FH: Do you find that, let's say, some of your friends came back here after they retired when they'd been away for years?

NESBIT: I don't know. Some of them have. I know people that can't stand /the big cities/. You couldn't hire me to live in Chicago now! Although that's where my relatives, my nephews and all of them . . . they're up in Chicago. My son's in San Francisco. I think it's cheaper to live in the cities this size than in Chicago, New York, with all the problems that they have and everything up there. The /seniors/ get around here, and I guess they . . . well, I don't know. They sure gang down at that Honey Creek Square on Sunday!

FH: You mean they go down there and sit around?

NESBIT: Sit around! Boy, you . . . seems to me like they're all down there! I don't know. I've seen friends of mine from Paris and Coal City and Clay City and Shelburn, Sullivan. Do you go down there on Sunday? Oh, man, why there're thousands of cars parked down there.

FH: Have you ever been sorry you stayed in Terre Haute?

NESBIT: Oh, no! No, no. I've enjoyed Terre Haute. Of course, here I was a sportswriter. All my life I've enjoyed the fact that . . . I don't know why, but I couldn't go anyplace and not walk in and I don't care whether the guy's a millionaire or a bum, he treated me nice because I was a sportswriter. If I walked in there and somebody told them I was a city editor, that didn't mean a thing to him. It might mean something to some college professor up here, but just to him. The mere fact that I was a sportswriter . . . why, lord, I . . . like I was in St. Louis at a world series one time and didn't have a room. I met some guy in there and told him I was a sportswriter from Terre Haute. About 9 o'clock that night some guy come over and gave me a key, and I said, "What's that?" He said, "Oh, this guy likes you over here and he went down and got you a key. Got you a room, right here . . . right here in the main /hotel/." Just because I was . . . and that could be true in Chicago or anyplace. I don't know.

FH: As a newspaper man do you feel that Terre Haute deserved the name Sin City any more than any other city?

NESBIT: No, I don't think Terre Haute particularly

NESBIT: deserves the name of Sin City any more than any other city.

FH: Do you think we've had more political scandals?

NESBIT: Yes. We've had them.

FH: But any more than any other city?

NESBIT: We've had . . . well, like letting that gambling ring come in here that time, a big two million dollar gambling ring. And then they wrote a big feature story about it in the Saturday Evening Post. That really hurt Terre Haute. And a lot of things like that. Like the bringing the soldiers in the Columbian & Enameling stamping mill General Strike of 1935 and . . . But I think a lot of that was undeserved, that the miners would cause trouble. I don't think the miners would cause trouble. . . would have caused them any trouble at all. But I think a lot of them were afraid of that.

Although I'll tell you this. There's a big corporation right down on South 1st Street. If you went there to apply for a job and if you told them that even any of your relatives were coal miners, they wouldn't give you a job. Even if you had a cousin that was a coal miner, they wouldn't give you a job.

FH: You mean now?

NESBIT: This happened less than 20 years ago. Not now. I don't know what the policy is. At that time, a colored person couldn't work there.

FH: Do you feel that out-of-town newspapers have given Terre Haute a bum rap on what . . .

NESBIT: Oh, have they ever!

FH: . . . things have happened here?

NESBIT: Sure. Sure, they've given Terre Haute a bum rap. But then, of course, a lot of it was deserved.

FH: But you don't think it. . . you really don't think it deserved the name of Sin City.

NESBIT: Noooo. Not particularly more than a lot of other cities. Look at Peoria, Illinois. Terre Haute had a line for years. Peoria, Illinois, had a line for years. Peoria was running gambling over there. I mean big time gambling. And a coaching friend of mine from Illinois went over there and won some money, and he couldn't even get out of the joint! Every time he was going to get out of the joint, somebody was going to take the money away from him. So finally, he just had to go back in the place and play until he lost all his money, and then he could leave the place. And that's in the big city of Peoria, Illinois. So, you never know.

FH: Do you think during Prohibition Terre Haute had more bootlegging places than most places?

NESBIT: No. I have no way of knowing that.

FH: Do you think our line was any . . . the Red Light District down the line was any worse than any other city this size?

NESBIT: Oh, I'd say it probably was. Yes. Yes. Although Evansville had a line then. Peoria had a line. I asked Forrest how many people they allowed on a line; at one time there was supposedly as many as 500 women down here when . . . you know, when everybody was broke. And a lot of women were touring around the country, you know, in those days. And so there might have been more. I don't know. But . . .

FH: The Depression hit Terre Haute, if I remember correctly, before it hit most places. Was it because of the mines shutting down?

NESBIT: I have no idea, no idea about that. The only thing I remember about the Depression . . . I was lucky. I was working on the newspaper and never lost a day's work, and you didn't either. But I remember the one time that the advertising . . . all the advertising men on the paper were called back and they cancelled their vacations because the paper was cutting it pretty thin on profits. And he said . . . the owners . . . well, one of the owners . . . Incidentally, talking about owners, you remember in those days the owner of the paper Andrew Keifer had his chauffeur who picked him up and took him home.

NESBIT: You remember half the men on Wabash Avenue had chauffeurs who picked them up at noon and drove them around? That's all an era of the past. Of course, chauffeurs were, I guess, a common thing then in those days. If you had a little money, you could have a chauffeur.

But the owner brought the ad men back and made them come back to work and cancelled vacation time. Apparently business started picking up.

FH: Don't you feel that the ownership of the paper, the Tribune-Star, when you and I went over there to work was not interested in the paper as such but only in the money.

NESBIT: Well, I got no way of knowing that. All I know is that a lot of papers are supposed to run 60-40 on their ads -- 60% news and 40% ads on a page -- and I don't think they pay any attention to that. And of course, I don't think any other papers do around the country either. I think they all just . . . in fact, there's nobody cracking the whip on them to see that that's what they do.

FH: Well, isn't that part of the postal thing?

NESBIT: Yes, it is part of the postal deal. Yes, it's part of the postal regulations. But I don't think anybody pays any attention to it because I don't see it in Indianapolis, Chicago or anyplace else.

FH: Do you think newspapers could put out extras now like they used to?

NESBIT: Sure, if they wanted to. But they . . . I don't know. That kind of habit just . . . of course, in the old days . . . one reason they don't put out any now, there's no competition. I mean extras. In the old days when they had competition, if you got a big scoop, you put out an extra. Thought you had the jump on the other guy. But that's the reason you don't see any extras now.

FH: Actually, an extra was just that day's paper, and then it was made over on the next edition.

NESBIT: Yes, and put a new story on there and just . . . made a hole and put it in there and marked it extra, and that was it. And . . . but then I think the lack of competition is the whole thing on that.

FH: Do you think lack of competition on the newspapers has affected the town?

NESBIT: Oh, I wouldn't say it affected the town. It's probably affected it some, but it's hard to say, very debatable, thing like that. I'm not the one to answer that question, I don't think.

FH: But you'll say all good things about Terre Haute, right?

NESBIT: No, I don't say all good things about Terre Haute. I'm happy to be living over in Brazil.

FH: (laughs)

Thank you, Bob. We appreciate the interview, and I feel it will be of interest to many people what you said about the town and the newspapers and politics. We appreciate your coming down and talking to us.

NESBIT: Well, thank you very much. I'm glad to do it.

END OF TAPE

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